KNIGHTQUEST™ THE SEARCH

JUSTICE LEAGUE TASK FORCE

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MICHELINIE, VELLUTO & ALBRECHT

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JUSTICE LEAGUE® TASK FORCE™

DEATH IN THE CARIBBEAN!

JLI™

Velluto-Albrecht 6·1·93

KNIGHTQUEST: THE SEARCH

SANTA PRISCA
AEROPUERTO
CAN I KILL HIM SLOWLY, UNCLE?
THE ONE IN THE WHEELCHAIR? CAN I MAKE HIM SCREECH LIKE A MONKEY?
WE WILL SEE, YOU LITTLE RASCAL.
THE VOICES ARE LOW AND SEEM TO BE LOST IN THE STORM-HEAVY SANTA PRISCAN NIGHT...

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...BUT NOT LOST ENTIRELY--

HAROLD BUILT A LOT OF TOYS INTO THIS CHAIR, INCLUDING A SOUND AMPLIFICATION SYSTEM. REALLY EXCELLENT EQUIPMENT.

LISTENING TO THE LOCAL RADIO ARE WE, MASTER BRUCE? RAP, PERHAPS? I BELIEVE BIG DADDY KANE IS A PARTICULAR FAVORITE--

I'M SCANNING THE AREA--

QUIET, ALFRED.

AND?

EVERY-THING IS AS I EXPECTED.

YOU DON'T LOOK HAPPY.

IT'S THIS PLACE...THIS *SANTA PRISCA*. I CAN'T HELP REMEMBERING THE LAST TIME WE WERE HERE. I WAS NEARLY A SHARK'S DINNER--

WE SHOULDN'T HAVE TO STAY LONG. IF ALL GOES AS I HOPE, WE'LL BE BACK ON THE PLANE TOMORROW.

THAT YOUNG WOMAN WHO SHARED THE FLIGHT WITH US, THAT MS. KYLE--

YOU'RE THE AUTHORITY.

SAID HER GOODBYE AND VANISHED INTO THE NIGHT. SHE SEEMS TO HAVE A *KNACK* FOR VANISHING INTO THE NIGHT.

ALTO

HERE THEY COME.

WE ARE READY.

POPO...YOU ARE OUR RESERVE FORCE. IF WE SHOULD FAIL, YOU WILL KILL THEM AT THEIR LODGINGS.

YES, CHIEF.

2

NOW!

AAAGH!

3

G-GAS...

IT WILL MAKE YOU WEEP. BUT IT WON'T KILL YOU.

CAN I DO IT, UNCLE? CAN I MAKE HIM SCREECH LIKE A MONKEY?

I CAN NEVER REFUSE YOU A THING, YOU LITTLE DICKENS.

THANK YOU, UNCLE.

NORTH AMERICAN, GET READY TO SOUND LIKE--

BRONZE TIGER, I PRESUME.

UMPH!

THAT NAME'LL DO.

YOU MUST BE BRUCE WAYNE--

--AND THIS HAS TO BE THE SANTA PRISCA LITTLE LEAGUE.

SORRY, GUYS, YOU MISSED THE BIG GAME.

IT WAS LAST OCTOBER--

--LOST!

--AND YOUR SIDE--

AND HERE'S THE GUY WITH THE GUN.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE HIS SKILLS, SIR?

TERRIBLE.

HE TOOK FOREVER TO GET HIS WEAPON OUT.

OH, YOU MEAN THE *TIGER'S* SKILLS!

THEY'RE FINE.

COME! WE GO!

BUT UNCLE--

DO NOT ARGUE! MOVE!

NOT SO FAST! YOU OWE ME A DANCE--

VYROOM

IF YOU WEREN'T IN THAT CHAIR, I MIGHT ENJOY RIPPING YOUR HEART OUT YOUR THROAT.

I'M AWFULLY SORRY, FELLOW.

CALL ME MISTER CLUMSY.

AS LONG AS WE DON'T CALL YOU "LATE FOR DINNER"?

LISTEN, LET ME MAKE IT UP TO YOU. THE REST OF THE EVENING--THE REST OF THE WEEK--IS ON ME.

WE BEGIN BY CHECKING YOU INTO MY HOTEL. DEAL?

SOON--

YOUR AUDIO EQUIPMENT WAS A DISAPPOINTMENT, MASTER BRUCE? YOU DIDN'T HEAR THOSE WOULD-BE ASSASSINS.

OH, BUT I DID. AND I ALSO HEARD THE TIGER HERE. SO WHEN I SAID, "EVERYTHING IS AS I EXPECTED"--

CANTINA

--I MEANT EVERY WORD.

YOU KNEW I'D BE AROUND?

A MISTER JONES AT JUSTICE LEAGUE HEADQUARTERS ASSURED A COLLEAGUE OF MINE THAT YOU WOULD.

GLAD HE HAS FAITH IN ME.

EXACTLY WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?

WHAT YOU'VE ALREADY DONE--KEEP ME ALIVE.

BAR

SEÑOR WAYNE?

AH, YOU GOT MY MESSAGE. THEN YOU KNOW WE'LL NEED FOUR ROOMS.

HOTEL

YOU REALIZE, SEÑOR, THAT THIS IS A VERY *SPECIAL* HOTEL--

CATERS ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY TO PHARMACEUTICAL MERCHANTS--

YEAH. DRUG DEALERS.

--AND OUR RATES ARE A BIT HIGH--

--TEN THOUSAND AMERICAN DOLLARS PER DAY.

DOES THAT INCLUDE INDOOR PLUMBING?

OF COURSE.

IN THAT CASE, NO PROBLEM. YOU *DO* TAKE CASH?

IT IS *ALL* WE ACCEPT, SEÑOR WAYNE.

THAT CERTAINLY SOLVES THE PROBLEM OF THOSE HIGH CREDIT CARD INTEREST RATES.

THEN, FIVE FLIGHTS OF STAIRS LATER--

HO

YOU'RE PROBABLY WONDERING--

HOTEL

BAR El Cuervo

HOTEL El Cuervo

HOTEL

--WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT.

DID YOU COME TOGETHER?

A LITTLE. IT WASN'T EASY GETTING ONTO THIS ISLAND.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I'M HERE ALONE.

THEN YOU *DIDN'T* ARRIVE--

--WITH THE YOUNG WOMAN--

--IN THE CORNER--

--OF THE ROOM.

THE NAME IS *GYPSY*, I BELIEVE.

ASTONISHING! HOW ON EARTH DID YOU SEE--

I HAD THE ADVANTAGE OF KNOWING SHE'D BE AROUND.

I ASKED JONES FOR SOMEBODY WHO WAS GOOD AT CONCEALMENT AND SUBTERFUGE. HE SAID NOBODY'S BETTER THAN GYPSY.

OBVIOUSLY, HE WAS RIGHT.

NOW, AS I WAS SAYING...WE'RE HERE BECAUSE TWO PEOPLE WERE KIDNAPPED FROM GOTHAM CITY A COUPLE OF NIGHTS AGO--A DOCTOR NAMED SHONDRA KINSOLVING AND AN AILING BUSINESSMAN, JACK DRAKE.

I HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THE KIDNAPPERS ARE FROM HERE. OUR JOB IS SIMPLE--FIND THEM, AND RESCUE SHONDRA AND DRAKE.

THAT'S WHAT YOU CALL SIMPLE, HUH? FOR OPENERS, IT'S A PRETTY BIG ISLAND AND WE DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START.

BUT WE DO. REMEMBER WHEN "MISTER CLUMSY" TRIPPED YOU UP?

HEY, MAN. IT'S A MOMENT I CHERISH.

I DID IT BECAUSE I *WANTED* THE ASSASSIN TO ESCAPE. A FEW SECONDS EARLIER, I'D PLANTED A TINY TRANSMITTER ON HIM.

THIS DISPLAY IS TUNED TO THE TRANSMITTER'S FREQUENCY. IT SEEMS OUR WOULD-BE KILLER IS ABOUT TWO KILOMETERS--

--DUE SOUTH OF HERE.

LOOKS LIKE A LARGE HACIENDA.

GYPSY, MAYBE YOU COULD SCOUT THE AREA?

MASTER BRUCE--ON THE BALCONY!

AAAGH!

SOMEBODY SKEWERED HIM.

THE ARROW HAD TO HAVE COME FROM THE ROOF ACROSS THE WAY.

I CAN'T SEE A THING--

I CAN, WITH THE HELP OF THESE NIGHT GLASSES.

INFRARED

0359.7 MT

GOOD. VERY GOOD.

OWWW...

COOL IT. MACHO GUY LIKE YOU SHOULD *ENJOY* A LITTLE PAIN. YOU'LL BE ABLE TO SHOW OFF THE SCAR, IMPRESS THE LADIES.

I'LL GET YOU PATCHED UP--

--AND TIE YOU WITH KNOTS THE BOY SCOUTS NEVER EVEN *HEARD* OF.

LISTEN UP, LADY AND GENTLEMAN. TIME TO PLAN THE EVENING'S *FESTIVITIES*.

SHALL I PHONE THE CATERER, SIR?

NOT UNLESS HE SERVES BULLETPROOF VESTS WITH THE HORS D'OEUVRES.

GYPSY, YOU GO TO WHERE THE TRANSMITTER IS--A BUILDING TWO KILOMETERS DUE SOUTH, REMEMBER? GET INSIDE, HAVE A LOOK AROUND, COME BACK AND REPORT. DON'T TAKE CHANCES.

IF SHE GETS IN TROUBLE, DO SOMETHING.

ON ONE CONDITION. SHE'S GOTTA SHUT UP. THE WOMAN'S TALKING MY EAR OFF.

NOBODY SAID THIS ISN'T A DIRTY JOB.

IF WE DON'T HEAR FROM YOU IN TWO HOURS, WE'LL REACT.

MHPHF

TIGER, YOU GO WITH HER. WAIT OUTSIDE.

CHECK. AND IF WE'RE DONE WITH THE HUMAN SHISH KEBAB HERE, I'LL DUMP HIM. I DON'T THINK HE'S A THREAT ANYMORE.

THIS MUST BE... *DIFFICULT* FOR YOU --STAYING BEHIND WHILE OTHERS ENGAGE IN BOLD VENTURES.

IT TAKES GETTING USED TO, I'LL ADMIT. BUT I'VE *GOT* TO DEAL WITH IT, AND SO I WILL.

SELF-PITY IS SOMETHING I'VE *NEVER* BEEN ABLE TO AFFORD.

ANYWAY, MY FEELINGS AREN'T IMPORTANT. WE'VE GOT TO STAY FOCUSED ON THE JOB--RESCUING SHONDRA AND JACK.

MORE OF HAROLD'S HIGH-TECH WIZARDRY?

YES. A SATELLITE LINK WITH GOTHAM CITY.

I'LL ESTABLISH THE CONNECTION--

TLAC

TLAC

TLAC BZZZ

--ENCODE THE TRANSMISSION--

TIC TLAC

BZZZ

TIC TIC TIC

TOC

TRRR

--AND, AS A FINAL PRECAUTION, CLOAK THE WHOLE TRANSMISSION IN WHITE NOISE.

BRUCE? I READ YOU LOUD AND CLEAR.

LISTEN, THE BAD GUYS WERE WAITING FOR US. PROBABLY HAD ORDERS TO KILL ANYONE WHO MIGHT BE TROUBLE. WHICH HAS TO MEAN THAT--

--SOMEBODY AT THE GOTHAM AIRFIELD TOLD THEM WE WERE COMING. SO THAT MEANS SOMEBODY'S IN THE PAY OF THE PEOPLE WHO RUN SANTA PRISCA.

ANY WORD FROM THE KIDNAPPERS? RANSOM DEMAND? REQUEST FOR THE RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS?

NOTHING.

BRUCE, PLEASE-- DO YOUR BEST.

HE'S MY FATHER.

THEN WE'LL JUST GO AHEAD WITH WHAT WE'RE DOING.

I'LL BRING HIM HOME, TIM.

I PROMISE.

NOW, WE WAIT FOR THE TIGER AND GYPSY?

IT'S ALL WE *CAN* DO.

EXACTLY TWO KILOMETERS SOUTH --

YOU'RE *NEW* AT THIS, AREN'T YOU, KID? NERVOUS?

WELL, YOU'LL GET OVER IT. JUST DON'T GET *TOO* FAR OVER IT.

OVERCONFIDENCE CAN MAKE YOU DEAD.

THAT MUST BE THE PLACE.

I CAN SEE AT LEAST TWO GUARDS. THERE ARE PROBABLY MORE. YOU WANT ME TO TAKE 'EM OUT?

NO, HUH? OKAY, I'LL WAIT FOR YOU HERE.

AND KID... WHEN YOU'RE INSIDE, TRY NOT TO TALK *TOO* MUCH.

KID'S AMAZING.

NO, NO--

--NO, NEPHEW. YOU CANNOT CUT THEM--

--AT LEAST NOT UNTIL SEÑOR ASP ARRIVES. BUT I PROMISE--IF HE SAYS THEY ARE DISPOSABLE, THE PLEASURE WILL BE YOURS.

CAN'T YOU UNTIE ME FOR A FEW MINUTES? I'M A DOCTOR--

--AND MY PATIENT NEEDS MY ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY. CAN'T YOU SEE THAT?

AS LONG AS HE LIVES UNTIL ASP COMES, I DO NOT CARE.

I WOULD NOT WANT TO DEPRIVE THIS LITTLE LAD OF HIS FUN, NO?

MIGUEL, HAVE WE HEARD FROM POPO?

NO, CHIEF.

HE MUST HAVE FAILED.

I AM OUT OF PATIENCE. ARM YOUR MEN WITH ROCKET LAUNCHERS FROM THE ARMORY AND DESTROY THE HOTEL--WITH THE FOREIGNERS IN IT.

AND MIGUEL--

18

--IF, LIKE POPO, YOU DO NOT SUCCEED, THIS LITTLE RASCAL HERE WILL HAVE A VERY PLAY-FUL TIME WITH YOU, AS WELL. UNDERSTAND?

THE FOREIGNERS WILL BURN, CHIEF.

AN UMBRELLA? YOU BRING AN UMBRELLA ON A MISSION?

IT IS RAINING, IDIOT!

19

YOU ARE AFRAID YOU WILL MELT?

I CATCH COLD EASILY.

WE SHOULD HURRY. IT IS ALMOST DAWN.

TWENTY MINUTES LATER--

CIRCLE THE HOTEL. ONE ON EACH SIDE. AIM FOR THE TOP FLOOR WHERE THE FOREIGNERS ARE AND --

--WHEN YOU HEAR MY SHOT, FIRE!

A NOISE LIKE A BOARD BREAKING--

--AND ANOTHER, LIKE THE HISS OF SOME MONSTROUS SERPENT--

--AND THEN A ROAR, AND ANOTHER, AND A THIRD AND FOURTH, MELDING INTO A SINGLE SHATTERING ERUPTION OF SOUND--

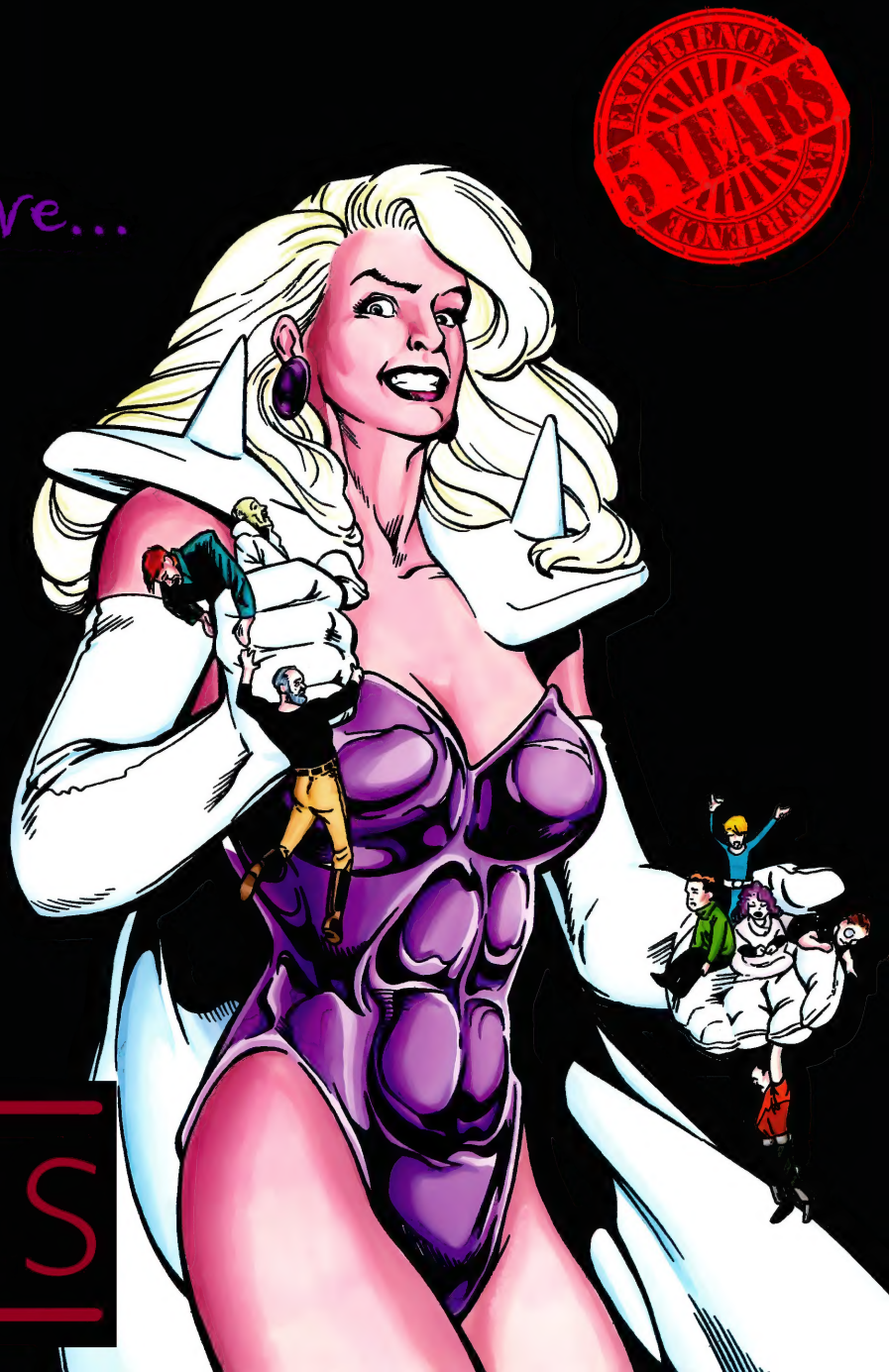
--THAT ECHOES--

--MINGLES WITH THE CRACKLE OF FLAMES AND--

--FADES TO A MURMUR...

TO BE CONTINUED--

From Baaldur, with love...



GLORITH

novus